

Quick Guide to Library Research

Find keywords

- **FIRST** examine your assessment question and identify **keywords** or **concepts**.
These are the words or concepts with the greatest significance in the assessment question.
The assessment question cannot be copy/pasted into library search engines, these search engines work best with keywords only, not questions.

As an example, the keywords in this mock question are highlighted.

There are a series of **academic skills** required of you when studying at **university**.
Choose 4 **academic skills** & provide a guide on how students can better develop them.

- **NEXT** look at your keywords or concepts and identify **synonyms**.
Often there is more than one term for a concept. You may find better results by using a synonym rather than the original keyword used in the assessment question.

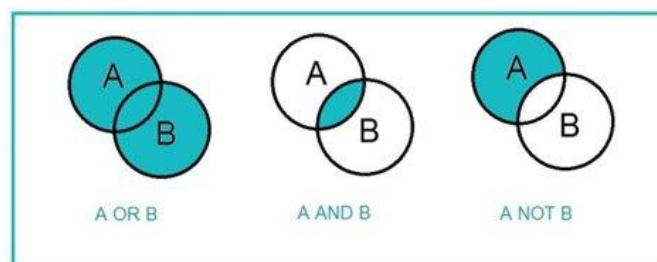
E.g. Synonyms of university are; tertiary education, higher education, college (as used by Americans)

See the **Topic Analysis** help sheet for more tips <https://studyskills.federation.edu.au/student-skills/helpsheets>

Search effectively

Make your searches more effective by using one or more of these search tips.

- **AND** – Search for articles that include all terms entered
 - University **AND** assessment
- **OR** – Search for articles that feature at least one of the alternative terms entered
 - Put OR searches in brackets. (university **OR** college) **AND** (assessment **OR** test)
- **NOT** – Exclude the irrelevant term from the search results
 - Place NOT searches at the end. university **AND** (assessment **OR** test) **NOT** college



AND / OR / NOT must be in capital letters for search engines to recognize them as instructions.

- **Phrase search** – If a key term is made up of more than one word, link them together as a single concept using quotation marks
 - “tertiary education” is a more focused search
- **Truncation** – Search for variations of a word by shortening a word to its root and replacing the remaining letters with an asterisk (*).
Research* = research**ed**, research**er**, research**ers**, research**es**, research**ing**

Putting it together – you can use all the above search tips in one search

(university OR “tertiary education”) AND “student skills” AND austral* NOT college

But it’s often best to start with simple searches and build up to complex searches.

Where to search

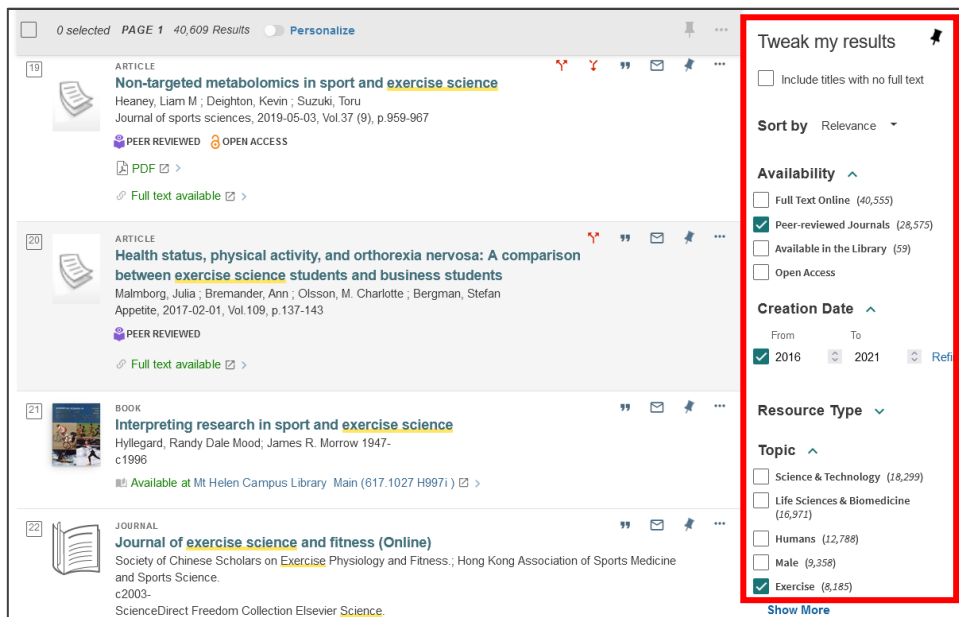
At University you are expected to use **scholarly** resources.

Scholarly sources are written by *experts* in a field and provide *authoritative* and *credible* evidence to back up the arguments in your assessments.

Generally, scholarly resources are NOT found or freely accessible with a basic internet search.

BUT, depending on the assessment, you may need to search the Library's resources OR use the internet.

- **QuickSearch** – this is like Google for the library. Search the library's physical and online resources quickly and easily with keywords. Results will contain books, eBooks, journal articles and video. All results will have full-text available.
 - QuickSearch has filters to **refine results** when there are too many.



The screenshot shows a search results page with a sidebar titled "Tweak my results". The sidebar contains the following filters:

- Include titles with no full text
- Sort by: Relevance
- Availability:
 - Full Text Online (40,535)
 - Peer-reviewed Journals (28,575)
 - Available in the Library (59)
 - Open Access
- Creation Date:
 - From: 2016 To: 2021
 - 2016 2021
- Resource Type
- Topic:
 - Science & Technology (18,299)
 - Life Sciences & Biomedicine (16,971)
 - Humans (12,788)
 - Male (9,358)
 - Exercise (8,185)

- **Internet** – The internet can be used for research, but careful evaluation of the source is required before including it in your work.

Find:




 - **Government reports and statistics** – all government departments from Federal to State to local governments publish reports and statistics that can be useful to your assessments.
 - See the Library's Subject Guides on your subject area and refer to the '[Finding statistics and reports](#)' tab for instructions on how to easily find government reports.
 - **News** – If your assessment incorporates **current events**, you will need to source information from trustworthy news sites. Check the publishing organisation, as well as the individual news report, editorials, or opinion pieces for possible bias.
 - See the Library's Subject Guide on [Fake News](#) for more on this topic

Get help

Library staff are here to help and happy to help with researching or referencing questions.

- Call 1300 552 567 or Chat with a librarian on the homepage during library opening hours.
- Email any time through the [Ask the Library](#) link on the homepage.

Chat is online
Ask the Library
Feedback

1300 552 567